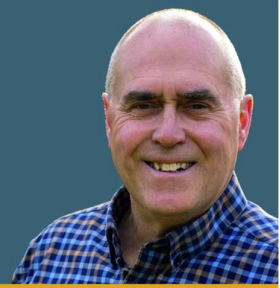


Harvey LENNON

FOR MAYOR, COUNCILLOR, HOBART

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OPINION

Delivering a Transport Plan for A Better Hobart

Submitted by Harvey Lennon, former CEO of RACT and current candidate for Hobart Mayor and Councillor.

Is it just me or are our daily commutes around Hobart taking longer than a decade ago? Do we feel like the 'peak hours' are expanding in both the mornings and the afternoons? Is it taking more than one change of lights to get across intersections more often than it used to?

This is not surprising as the population of Greater Hobart has more than doubled since the 1960s when the 'bellwether of Hobart traffic', Macquarie and Davey Streets, were changed from two way to one way. Over the past decade, the population of Hobart has grown by 14% and in the next decade is expected to grow by about another 10%. If everything else stays the same then our daily commutes will take longer and longer.

This isn't just an issue for the Hobart local government area. This is an issue for the adjacent Councils and the State as it impacts lifestyle and productivity across the Greater Hobart area.

Transport data shows about 25000 vehicles enter Hobart over a two hour period on an average weekday morning, of which about 8000 are just passing through. Between 3pm and 6pm of an evening there are about 35000 vehicle movements through Hobart. As a rule of thumb, a reduction of 10 percent makes a noticeable difference to the flow of traffic. We notice the difference during school holiday periods. The current free public transport policy is also making a difference.

I have a vision for A Better Hobart. A Hobart which moves. A Hobart where people spend less time in traffic and more time with family and enjoying the City we love.

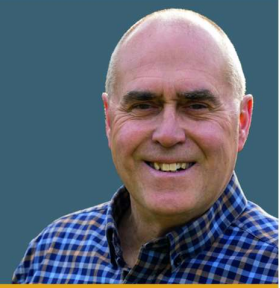
There have been lots of well thought out ideas including tunnels, link roads and the like. All these may be considered in the long term but I believe its time to listen to the people, gather the evidence and partner with major stakeholders to create the Hobart we want.

Cars will continue to play an important part in our future transport needs, though the ownership model will likely change toward car share and peer-to-peer. It is acknowledged that for many the car may be their best option because of where they travel to and from, because of work-related trips during the day or because of other activities during the day like children's sport or carer responsibilities.

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However, we should make other options like public transport more effective for more people so that it can play a larger role along with safe active transport options. If an additional 4000 - 5000 commuters a day chose an alternative to the car then it would make a noticeable difference.

It is pleasing to see people coming and going on the ferry between Hobart and Bellerive. I have taken the trip a couple of times when I had business in Bellerive and it is a great service. There are currently over 600 passenger trips per day across the Derwent. However, back in the mid-1970s, following the collapse of spans of the Tasman Bridge, there were over 26,000 passenger trips per day. Back then, we had integrated bus services taking people to the ferry terminals. Wouldn't it be great to make the Derwent River work harder again with a couple more ferries. I know Lindisfarne is being considered. How about Wilkinsons Point or Taroona?

An integrated bus service to make catching ferries more attractive could be something Hobart City supports in partnership with adjacent Councils. Integrated ticketing would make it even better.

For years we've talked about reactivating the northern corridor. It would be great to see people travelling from Moonah to the City on rapid transport. I know that raises the question about whether it is a bus or a train. In my view we should activate whichever can be done most efficiently while keeping options open for the future.

Active transport should also be considered. For many years I walked to and from home in South Hobart to the CBD where I worked. I often left my car parked in the CBD so that I had it for work trips during the day. Cycling is also a good form of active transport which more people are choosing. Active transport also delivers health benefits for those who are physically able and living in a location where the option is feasible. All active transport requires safe infrastructure, well designed and well maintained. That might be another whole topic.

It's time to start getting the vision down on paper and planning a transport future that will meet the needs of our children and their children, especially as the population of Hobart continues to grow. Hobart City Council should partner now with adjacent Councils and the State Government to deliver the quick wins which will make our daily commutes easier and quicker.